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# The LABOUR ORGANISER

Edited by  
**H. DRINKWATER**

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**FOR  
VIGOUR  
AND FOR  
VICTORY**

**A Galaxy of Good  
Articles**

Proprietors & The National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents

ESTABLISHED 1920

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## THE TRUCE IS SICK—

## ARE WE SICK TOO—OF THE TRUCE?

"We jointly agree, as representing the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Parties, as follows:—

- (a) Not to nominate candidates for Parliamentary vacancies that now exist, or may occur, against the candidate nominated by the Party holding the seat at the time of the vacancy occurring.
- (b) This Agreement shall hold good during the war, or until determined on notice given by any one of the three Parties signatories hereto."

Those are the terms of the Electoral Truce, signed in September, 1939, by the three Chief Party Whips, and ten thousand times decried and mis-described as a Political Truce.

In reporting same to the Party Conference these words were used: While agreeing to the Truce, the N.E.C. has made it clear that the Party is perfectly free to carry on its normal functions as the official Opposition in Parliament, and its general political activities in the country as occasion may demand.

Note that this truce remains officially unmodified to this day. There is no "three months' notice" provided for, as some papers have alleged.

And now the questions arise: "Is the truce outworn? Shall it be terminated? And what are the consequences?"

The "L.O." itself no lover of compromise, has consistently supported the truce because it seemed only sensible

to refrain from elections so long as the majority of electors could not vote, and because of the abnormality of war-time elections. We urged and suggested methods for dealing with that abnormality. A scheme for a war-time general election (if found necessary) has now been prepared by a Home Office Committee, and there seems to be no great obstacle to the proposals there made being modified for by-elections.

On the latter ground alone we might still hesitate because a general election to replace the present moribund House of Commons seems to us of greater import than fighting by-elections. We ourselves might wait for that, for we have never attached to by-elections the importance some people do.

It is rot to say that by-election victories indicate the country's feeling. As much political history testifies against that theory as for it. For by-elections are won on personal, temporary and passing issues very, very often.

But three and a half years have passed since the Truce was made. Have the circumstances changed? Does the truce still work as it did in the first 18 months of the war, when out of 54 by-elections only 17 were contested, and out of these (apart from a scrap between two Tories) not one of the nondescript challengers came in sight of winning. In twelve cases deposits were lost. Compare these results with to-day's instances.

A third question we might ask is

whether the truce, necessarily a temporary expedient, any longer serves the national interest now that it has resulted in about one-sixth of the House of Commons being comprised of "nominated members"—i.e., persons selected and advanced under the Truce without free and popular elections?

To each one of those questions we shall now feel bound to return an answer unfavourable to a continuance of the truce.

But these are not the only issues. The reaction upon the Coalition is outside our sphere. That matter the Party will gravely consider. We are concerned only with electoral issues; and while a breach with the Coalition would have electoral repercussions of no small order, we leave the question of whether the denunciation of the Truce would necessarily result in a break, or whether a break is desirable in national or Party interests, to be argued elsewhere.

But we *can* look at further evidence.

And to-day we have a vastly different political situation to the early days of the war. As for the by-elections, no longer is the truce observed by all but the weak and insignificant. Strong and powerful candidates come along, steal our thunder and poll our votes. Meantime, the Labour Party looks on, tied by the truce; the Tory triumphs; the local Party is dismayed, disgusted and discouraged; years of effort count for nought and the handicap against future victory for Socialism is grievously increased. And the advice to vote Tory is the last fatuity and folly of all!

So that's the situation. National unity, never much more than a sham, is the shibboleth used to perpetuate the handing over of Labour hopes, Labour prospects, and probable Labour victories to the very people whose challenge to Socialism is now unmistakable as day.

Must this situation continue indefinitely? Well, I ask you!

## UP AND AT 'EM!

Recent political developments have "played heck," as Lancashire says, with certain ideas of national unity, a "unity" to be maintained only so long as Labour lay quiet, made no demands and viewed with docility the postponement of all its hopes, and the rule of the lords and masters of the pre-war realm.

The question of a coupon election has received a nasty knock; it is probably killed stone dead. And "the-ten-years - National - Unity - after-the-war" stunt has also received the *coup-de-grâce*. Who, anyway, wanted these things, except perhaps a few only of the "faithful" office-holders who voted for the Government?

With the truce we are not here concerned, for, as we have pointed out again and again, no political truce ever existed; only vain hopes, vainer ambitions, and greedy expectations. What is crystal clear now is that all Labour's programme will be fought and must be *fought for*, and we mightily rejoice thereat, for victory, not mortification and disillusion, lie at the end of the road.

The "L.O." throughout the war, throughout the Coalition, throughout "the understanding" has stoutly maintained that Labour would never gain anything worth having for its people "except by the power of its own right arm." We have urged the Party to prepare and to strengthen and make ready for the day. Look at the situation. We are proved right.

\* \* \*

So awake, you sluggards! Let Labour accept the challenge. There are two opposing slogans. The Tory cry is "What we have we hold!" Ours, "What we want we'll win!"

Borrow another for make-weight (and for answer)—and "Go to it, Labour!"

And now, as the dawn of battle glimpses, let us consider. What need we? First of all, let us remember that since 1939 Labour's machinery has been badly rusted.

But the spirit matters most, and first. Who's for a fight? Well, we *all* are!

Nothing on earth will revive

Labour's prospects, its soul and its machinery like a fight for Labour's own programme. It may even avoid the Party's demise. Will the N.E.C. lead? Will the challenge be taken up? Shall the tocsin sound, the drums beat and the march of workers' feet tramp, tramp, tramp to a coming victory, to a national and a world awakening? It depends; depends on us.

\* \* \*

We ask (we don't wait for the lead), we urge all Labour Parties to begin their reviews, to start and get ready. We know the thousand difficulties of a war-time machine. But there are thousands who will answer a real call. A yearning people will await the Clarion that will hail us from the present sloth.

The success of a call depends on its being heard. Quick and wise propaganda is, therefore, needed. Surely we can answer with that.

No Party should neglect to-day to discuss at its meetings the import of recent events. Solution of local difficulties will largely lie there.

Nationally, too, the Party must work. We must take up the gauntlet; prepare a country-wide plan for reviving local parts; plan on large lines for financial and material needs; and seek at once the personnel for a mighty Labour force, inspired and prepared to conquer.

The minor means are not for this article. We shall deal with these elsewhere.

#### CANDIDATURES

##### FRESH ENDORSEMENT

**LANCS.:** Lonsdale.—Mr. Norman L. Nevison, 327, Lancaster Road, Morecambe, Lancs. D.L.P.

##### CANDIDATURES WITHDRAWN

**SUFFOLK:** Lowestoft.—Rev. A. D. Belden.

**HANTS.:** Winchester.—Mr. R. Mack.

##### EXPULSION

**NORFOLK:** King's Lynn.—Major F. J. Wise.

(Concluded from page 2.)

J528 CD East Fife D.L.P.

J538 BD Camlachie D.L.P.

J547 BD Pollok D.L.P.

J555 CD Lanark D.L.P.

## YOUTH

The L.P. League of Youth Bulletin contains the following significant comment:

"The League's future is being considered by the National Executive Committee. Those who have been doing consistent political work amongst young people will know that the organisation of 'Youth' does not lend itself to easy solutions. . . Can we give youth a more adequate opportunity inside the Party rather than imply the necessity of joining 'the Young People's Section?' Does this 'sectionalising' really get hold of the young man or woman who is likely to be really interested in the Labour Movement? Does it retain the interest and service of 'the sticker?' Is it fair to the keen youngster to urge him to expend untold energy organising social attractions for those of his own age with little or no interest in politics? Or should the Party, nationally or locally, spend money trying to compete with community organisations by setting up Youth Clubs as a means of gently leading young people to the acceptance of Socialist principles?

"These questions must be faced since we must find ways and means of attracting the young folk who are really worth while. Let us know your views."

If we may offer a suggestion to the N.E.C. it would be to remind them that the Party's failure with its Youth Movement is due, as we said long ago, to beginning too late. Do the Tory Party, or the Churches for that matter, leave conversion and influence to the days of adolescence? No fear; none of them neglect the children—as we do.

The Bulletin reminds us that a few League branches are doing a fine job of work, notably Birtley (Co. Durham), Southall (Middlesex) and West Fulham. The two former both publish magazines. North Islington, Llanelli, Kettering, and Huddersfield also report creditable activities.

- Mr. J. R. JOHNSTONE, Murrays Cottages, Balmullo, Leuchars, Fife.
- Mr. W. HOSIE, 270, Cumbernauld Road, Glasgow, E.1.
- Mrs. J. MANN, 9, Victoria Park Corner, Glasgow, W.4.
- Mr. S. FRASER, Bloomfield, Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire.

# What we can do to-day

The political situation calls for action. Labour has a fight in prospect. Unexpected to some, earlier than others thought, but big enough in all conscience.

The thinnest edge of Labour's programme has been bent back; the real program not even presented, and certain of contemptuous rejection.

Therefore, we proceed to prepare for fight or we perish.

We put to Local Parties the following proposals for immediate action. These are conceived with a knowledge of *present* difficulties, many of which, we believe, a forward movement will gradually remove.

We avoid "heroic," too ambitious and spectacular proposals and keep our suggestions within the limits of present possibilities.

1. Call a full meeting of the Party to consider the political situation. Don't just pass an indignant resolution about the Beveridge Report. Read our article thereon first and get the future fight in proper perspective.

2. Resolve to re-organise and take steps to review the Party's whole strength and revive missing parts.

3. Arrange at least one demonstration; if possible, several.

4. If no Parliamentary candidate has been selected, review the situation. Consult H.Q.

5. Membership efforts should be specially directed to rope in those attracted to protest meetings. The interests of Trade Unions in the present situation is unmistakable, and opportunity might be sought for making individual members among Trade Unionists.

6. Almost every Party's finances need restoration. Issue a special appeal for your agitation. Approach the Trade Union branches, too. Try this opportunity for putting T.U. affiliations on a paying basis.

7. Call back to the Party some of the worthy workers who, during the war, have proved their money-raising and organisational abilities in "sympathetic" work. We cannot spare all these people to-day.

8. As collectors are scarce, give new members a chance to volunteer. Place new members on a *monthly* basis and consult present collectors as to the possibility of converting all collections to monthly periods.

9. Don't let the agitation die down. Meetings may slacken or big war news distract. Try letters in the press at suitable periods.

10. Remember, the situation must be used to strengthen and prepare the Party, otherwise you fail. If, therefore, results in members, money and interest are not being achieved, call a Party meeting to consider progress and methods. As well not start as to fail on the way. The present political situation will not blow over; it is the beginning of a great cleavage—the people versus the interests.

11. Remember, the Communists will not help you in *this* battle. Don't accept their proffered local co-operation either.

## THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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# MENTIONS

Hard luck at Reading and we sympathise with our comrades of this brilliant Party, and with our old friend the Agent, J. A. W. Douglas, at the loss by enemy action of the Party offices and Labour Hall. That loss alone may mean something like £500 a year. Will those who can help do so, and do so quickly?

In last month's issue of the "Labour Organiser" we expressed some curiosity over the "Topical Discussions" initiated by the Harrow L.L.P. It seems that these "Discussions" were introduced some months ago. A member is selected by the General Committee to "open" at the Party meetings on any event of importance occurring during that particular month. The subjects have included: Middle East Operations, T.U. Congress, Reactionary Property Owners, Old Age and Supplementary Pensions, etc. This method of enlivening and making more interesting and instructive Party business meetings has everything to commend it, and we are not surprised to learn that attendance has been stimulated. By the way, this Party is giving a May Day Party to members' children on May 1st—an admirable idea, for we can't catch 'em too young, nor catch too many.

That some Labour M.P.s do a great deal of useful intensive work in their Divisions is not so well known as it might be, and must make the mouths water of some of our comrades whose representatives they rarely see, and then only on great occasions. Two cases recently came across our notice. There is Bob Morrison, M.P. for instance at South Tottenham, who puts in many hours and a terrific amount of work in his Division every week. We would be prepared to gamble that the Member sees and interviews more of his constituents each week than any other Member of the House of Commons. We may be wrong, but we should much like to know the M.P. who beats Bob Morrison's record.

Another instance is that of our old friend Mr. W. H. Oldfield, M.P. for

Gorton. Here the member headed a door-to-door campaign for members last August and September, and the membership increase in the Division for 1942 is worth looking at. Attendance at Ward meetings and the making of an M.P.'s report to his constituents is something, too, which has a note of unusualness.

The large correspondence we conduct throughout the country brings us, besides news of successes, many, many letters telling of difficulties, losses and even of despair. Our readers must not gather, because we quote many successes, that there are not also many tribulations and difficult problems presented by the war. We get, for instance, news from England's southern front (sometimes with bright spots in it). Thus we learn of a young man in the New Forest making 22 members himself since November. We get, too, stories of loss of collectors, loss of membership and situations calling for great stoutness of heart from comrades in the East End of London. These "Mentions" cannot all be made here individually, but we assure our readers that there are many brave men and women holding the fort and keeping a skeleton of a Party together, whose reports and balance sheets might not look so well as those we are able to quote in another column. But these men and women are serving a noble end and the "L.O." does its best to encourage them, often by personal correspondence.

One of the Parties which we see making a good fight is East Walthamstow. In 1939 there was a record in membership fees and an income of over £3 a week from a function which is not now possible. Yet there was no further drop in the membership last year and our friends have managed to build up a parliamentary fund of nearly £100.

We note that a number of prominent Labour folk in and around Essex and East London held a conference on 21st

February on "Vansittartism and the Labour Movement." We are not ordinarily well disposed to *ad hoc* conferences called by unofficial bodies, but we venture to think these conferences must be taken as a symptom. If the disease of "Vansittartism" takes a hold on our Movement (and the basic principles of Socialism are utterly opposed to Vansittart's foul fallacies) it must be expected that there will be persistent and spontaneous movements everywhere to combat the peril. Labour has nothing in common with advocates of after-war hatred, suppression and punishment of peoples. Our readers will remember that the official policy of the Labour Party lays down that a peace, to be just and lasting, must be agreed and not dictated. The Labour Party certainly does not stand for the vindictive treatment of a whole people.

We note that Croydon has its first Labour Mayor this year. This is Ald. Sam Roden, a Silverdale (Staffs.) man, who has a fine record of local service. He has represented the same Ward in Croydon for an unbroken period of 23 years. Croydon's Labour Group is comprised of 13 councillors and 3 aldermen out of 44 councillors and 14 aldermen. But for the war that disparity could have been much reduced. We also note that Croydon's 13 councillors support the Sunderland resolution asking for municipal elections to take place on 1st May instead of 1st November. Our readers will recollect that in the series of Electoral Reforms put forward in the "L.O." our proposal was that *all* elections should take place in the month of May.

The Yorkshire Regional Council of the Labour Party has launched a membership campaign with a target for each constituency on the lines adopted by the Lancashire Regional Council last year. The aim this year is for a £5,000 increase—quite a modest aim, and one that, given the full co-operation of each constituency, should be readily achieved. The "campaign points" circulated to Parties contained ten well-thought-out suggestions for running the campaign.

The Birmingham Borough Party (secretary, Jim Simmons) has begun the republication of a duplicated monthly letter to members under the

title of the "Birmingham Labour News." The Secretary also issues a monthly Bulletin to D.L.P. secretaries and affiliated organisations.

There are a number of local Parties, an examination of whose working provides many helpful hints to others. We will take this month the Sowerby Division, a scattered constituency of hills and valleys where excellent work is being done.

Prior to the war a live League of Youth looked after the outlying districts, rambling over the hills, delivering pamphlets and holding small meetings. Conscription and other calls of the war have played havoc with the League. In its place the D.L.P. has a Concert Party, which has given no less than 30 concerts, mostly in the remote parts of the Division. At these functions a short propaganda speech is invariably given.

There are in the Division 34 Labour members on Borough, U.D.C. and R.D.C. Councils. To counteract the evil of there being no elections the Party has organised special meetings of the councillors at two-month intervals at which speakers deal with Local Government matters. Visits are sometimes also made to municipal undertakings in the constituency, the councillors being accompanied by members of the Party. These visits sometimes assume quite important and respectable proportions and succeed in staying the lack of interest in Local Government affairs and in replacing apathy with a large measure of interest.

Membership, which went down in common with other Parties at the outbreak of war, went up last year, and the Party will be taking part in a regional membership effort in the coming summer.

Whenever a political or social function is about to take place the D.L.P. circularises members in the locality. The Party takes every advantage it can of press publicity, and has averaged half a column a time for the speeches at each of the 30 concerts above mentioned. The "Labour Organiser" is supplied to those in responsible positions and the "Labour Party Bulletin" is obtained for local councillors.

This Party must be fortunate in its leadership and officership. We commend the work done to lots of others in Divisions which really have no such special topographical difficulties as has Sowerby.

# A better Beveridge, please! and something plus!!

Mr. Ellis Smith, M.P., at Manchester, said the Beveridge Report contained the minimum the Labour Movement could be expected to accept.

The Government seemed to approach it as containing the maximum.

Thus a "Daily Herald" report, and thus, too, one of the most sensible utterances on this question.

Since we penned our startling article on the Beveridge Report (see issue No. 252) there has been a steady awakening among Labour Party exponents to the insufficiency of the Report, standing alone; to the fact that the Socialist programme demands far, far more; and we hear expressions of the view, which we first expressed, that even with every Beveridge proposal on the Statute Book there would be no real security for the workers while society remained on its present basis, nor could there be.

Our "Cold Douche for Half-a-Loaf Socialists" was the antidote to fulsome expressions of welcome for something which wasn't even a quarter of the loaf. During the last war, and at intervals ever since, and in the Reconstruction proposals that have since evolved, Labour's far-seeing demands go far beyond a mere equalisation of security under a Capitalist society. And now that Sir William has totted up the cost, and nicely elaborated the pros and cons and the processes for the latter proposal, Socialists would be mugs indeed to mistake the gravy for the joint or the savoury odour for the satisfying meal.

We were content when we wrote to leave the matter there, but the debate in the House, and the Government's attitude to the Report, have wrought a change in the situation. Labour must consider the tactics necessary to the altered position. Labour certainly is in a fighting mood. Let us see what about?

Did anybody ever seriously hope that this Government would "accept the Report, the whole Report, and nothing but the Report" (vide L.L.P and T.U. resolutions, *ad nauseam*)? Not, surely, outside of Bedlam.

And, despite Sir William's cherished beliefs, so ably presented in his "Daily Herald" articles, that the Government

has accepted most, even the pith, of his proposals, the fact remains that the really Socialist part of them, i.e., the Socialisation of Insurance Companies, has been kicked out.

Is the issue for future elections to be the *emasculated* Report (the compromise, the really "safe and sane" proposals, the "practical" ones, the "immediate possible and urgent" ones, etc., etc., as per the apologists), or the *full* Report as Labour claims? We know quite well what the compromise-loving Britisher, the tepid reformist and timid reformer will say to that. And we need not deceive ourselves, for the polling will tell the story. We might say we told you so, but what of that?

As we sought, perhaps imperfectly, to point out, Labour would make a major tactical blunder unless it emphasised the insufficiency of the Beveridge proposals instead of treating them as a God-sent solution of all our social ills.

It was up to Labour, and it is up to Labour now, to demand full measure; but also to show how "Beveridge" wouldn't work under a system which permanently left finance and production in private hands; still further to that, inflation (the vicious circle we know so much about) would operate to take away with one hand what was given with the other.

We repeat: It is up to Labour to demand its own full programme; to fight on its own ground. Would the issue *then* be the emasculated Report or the full one? We think not. Labour would have an unparalleled opportunity to expound its case in the contest (it has nothing to fear from that!), and we venture that no Government dare go to the country on the issue of the emasculated versus the full one with Labour's plus. No, no. Labour would have to be answered and met—with offers or concessions.

Think this out. For we oblige our comrades that victory is won by being audacious. To be obsequious is to seek defeat. The wisest slogan for Labour is "The Report—PLUS, PLEASE—and no short measure," if we deserve to win!

## REVIEWS

Post-war Education—a Labour View, by J. P. M. Millar. Price 3d, post free 4d. N.C.L.C., Tillicoultry, Scotland.

Says the author: "Orthodox education, from the nursery school to the university, is constantly and subtly impressing on young minds the standards of the existing social order."

And don't we know it! For it is a daily task to re-educate and re-interpret on Socialist lines the teaching absorbed by a young son in a grammar school. That we *do* succeed is perhaps evidenced by another young son who recently succeeded in convincing a tribunal that 'a blooded pact in a bloody conflict of Imperialist States was averse to all his instincts and teaching.'

But education, plus the parent, is a job for the State. What education?

Here hosts of people, even our own Party, look on education in a quantitative sense — something to be absorbed; the more the better; and in our phrase "from the nursery school to the university." We rarely think, as Millar points out, of the quality, the nature and the matter of that teaching, so averse as much of it is to Socialist thought, and so biased in a thousand degrees against the class from which the worker springs. Much of it, too, is for idle lives, for parasitic lives—untrue, valueless or fraudulent "education."

The author's plea is for *working-class* education, or, better stated, for education as viewed from a standpoint differing from a Capitalist outlook, with a newer, truer light on subjects; such light as the better world we are to turn to should appreciate and be educated for.

The Socialist thinker ought to read this booklet and be prepared to help shape his Party's views on education into something more in harmony with our hopes than a mere "ladder" of worn-out rungs.

Arthur Woodhouse writes a foreword. But why he should go out of his way to suggest that we must also prepare to educate the youth of Germany and other States passes our comprehension. We have got quite big enough task at home, and something, too, we have hardly begun.

## FILM SHOWS ON THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

By ALDERMAN JOSEPH REEVES

The Workers' Film Association decided, as soon as the Beveridge Report was published, to approach Local Labour Parties, Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies for the purpose of arranging a series of film shows to illustrate problems with which the Report deals. For the inclusive sum of £5 10s., a full programme of films was offered with cine-equipment and the services of an operator.

The response was immediate. Shows were arranged at Greenwich, Twickenham, Woking, Slaithwaite, Bacup, Chichester, Huddersfield and many other centres. Well-known speakers were invited to address these film meetings.

Greenwich was one of the first to organise such a meeting. Mr. Frank Shepherd, the Labour Agent, was able to obtain the services of the Right Hon. Arthur Greenwood, M.P., and, because people of all Parties are supporting the Report, he invited the Greenwich Borough Council to organise the meeting. The W.F.A. Film Unit will be showing a series of films, including "Enough To Eat," which deals with malnutrition; "Life Begins Again," showing how, by the scientific treatment of workers in industry, they can take on their former jobs; and "Mother and Child," which is an argument in favour of the treatment of mothers when the little ones are coming along.

Such film lectures should be held all over the country. Organisations would be well advised to engage the services of the Film Outfit of the W.F.A. and provide their constituents with an opportunity of seeing films which give visual point to the great injustices which the Report sets out.

(Concluded from page 12.)

kept intact. Parties have been re-organised and set upon their feet again. Like many D.L.P. reports, the full activity in the Division is not seen at first sight owing to the existence of strong local parties. Thus Sheerness is an L.L.P. in this Division, going from strength to strength with £1,000 to call its own. During the year Faversham held its first annual re-union with an attendance of over 500. We are glad Jerry kept away that day.

# Local Party Reports & Balance Sheets

The report of the Kent Federation of Constituency Labour Parties makes good reading, especially when one remembers the war-time geographical handicap of this county. The "Men of Kent" will have to look to their laurels, for the secretary is a woman—Mrs. E. D. Watts—and the all-round work performed during the year indicates an unusual degree of usefulness. The Federation held a series of conferences and one-day schools and compiled a speakers' panel. It dealt with membership and similar matters, and is to arrange periodical conferences with D.L.P. officers. It is reported that 13 out of 15 D.L.P.s in the county are functioning and 12 actively support the Federation. Our space does not permit us to mention a wide field of other organisational activities. A financial statement shows a saving on the year and in view of the inadequate finance with which Federations are supplied it is surprising what has been done on a total income of under £40.

The report of the Norwich Labour Party and Industrial Council excites unusual interest in view of the experiences of that city at enemy hands. Yet the report comes out despite blitzes and destruction of property, and one notes the Party still survives with an income of nearly £800 (nett). Despite Jerry, dances showed a nett profit of £200 10s. od.; Christmas was not forgotten and the Christmas draw showed a nett profit of £70 10s. od. The Ward Associations alone contributed £183 os. od., this item, of course, being the nett figure paid to the D.L.P. and not the gross income of the Wards. But the story is not complete unless we quote from a letter from the Agent, Jack Brooksbank, who writes:—"I have lost almost all my collectors during the past year, some killed or injured, others gone into the forces and others moved away, and it has been a struggle to keep going, but we are doing our best."

Incidentally, Mr. Brooksbank is this year's City Sheriff. In 1942 no less than 1,500 cases calling for advice were

dealt with. Surely there is something in the spirit of Norwich which inspires and renews one's faith in the triumph of our Cause.

Ipswich T.C. and L.P. also present a really striking balance sheet, though we do not appear to have received the annual report which would describe and enlarge on the work done by the Party. The Industrial Committee's income is, roughly, £100, but the income of the Political Committee is nearly £500, of which we think some items are nett. Ipswich's determination is indicated by an Election Fund of over £600 and a Development Fund of £109—plus a floating surplus of over £200, all soundly invested.

Halifax Labour Party can make the proud boast that their membership has increased every year since the war started. A nett increase of 113 brings the total membership up to 1,895. The income thereon was £359 18. 7d., which is more than double that of 1939. This triumph is not accidental, but, as the report says, is due to the untiring zeal and devotion of ordinary members, who have gone out night after night, wet or dry, daylight or black-out, not looking for praise or gain or spectacular results, but content to serve the Party as best they could. The income of the Party continues to mount and last year came to £932. The report, worthily presented and produced, records a year of useful work in all directions, and it is one which we shall treasure.

West Leyton D.L.P. present their report in great detail and with admirable clarity, particularly as to accounts. One is left in no doubt as to what and how much work is being done in all the numerous directions in which a Party may function. Almost everywhere there is something creditable to report. We have only room for a sample of what is being done and the

methods adopted. We quote:—

"Special attention was given to Forest Ward and in connection with a successful public meeting special letters were sent to all members. This was followed up with a canvass by Executive members. Beneficial results were obtained. A sub-committee of the Executive volunteered to assist with the collection of subscriptions in this Ward and the Ward is now satisfactorily covered. In all other Wards both distribution and collections are being effectively carried out."

The City of Leeds Labour Party, unlike a Divisional Party, has a peculiar task and special responsibilities. With 46 aldermen and councillors out of a total of 104 the piquancy of some of the Party's problems may be imagined. The report is that of a year of usefulness. It is gratifying to note that the Party paid over to D.L.P.s the sum of £113 as their share of affiliation fees. There was a saving on the year and the gross credit balance is nearly £340.

The City of Bradford Labour Party is another Borough Party with similar, though smaller, responsibilities. How they are being discharged may be gathered by the following quotation:-

"During the latter part of the year just ended an experiment was conducted in Little Horton Ward which resulted in reviving the Ward Committee and the enrolling of about 400 new individual members. Arising out of this we are hoping that in 1943 other Wards in the city will be revived and considerable additions made to the individual membership in those areas."

The financial statement showed an increase of cash in hand, the £81 at the commencement of the year having risen to £192 at the close, though, doubtless, as in the case of Leeds, this result is to some extent due to a change in the cost of officership. Bradford, by the way, whose office was blitzed, have an Office Restoration Fund and a balance in the bank in respect of same of £153 10s. od.

Faversham Division, one is reminded, lies on the doorstep of England (where the unwanted babies are left). The annual report shows that despite all difficulties the organisation has been

(Concluded on page 10.)

## OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the death of Mr. A. Glynn Evans, which took place at Greenwich. Mr. Evans had been for many years a Labour agent and was recently associated with the Co-operative Movement. The funeral took place on Tuesday, February 9th.

## MISSING

Our readers will also be distressed to hear that Mr. G. W. Cunningham, formerly secretary at Bristol Central, has been posted missing at sea since January 7th. It was only two or three months ago that we spoke highly of Mr. Cunningham's former work and reported a recognition by the Bristol Central L.P. Mr. Cunningham was one of the most promising of young organisers and was engaged to be married to another young comrade. His mother carries on the Party work in the Division named.

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## THE COMMUNIST MOVE

With an impertinence altogether incredible in persons other than the members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, that body recently applied for affiliation to the Labour Party. The application was, of course, once more turned down, and a statement issued by the N.E.C. of the Labour Party on the subject is a convincing document which ought to be read by every Labour person.

The destructive and unscrupulous tactics of British Communists should be well understood by now in every local party. That this is not so is the reason for the following observations.

In the first place, Communist infiltration into our Movement is a common enough practice. Communists in the Labour Party have no loyalty to the Party itself, and they are there to worm themselves in, as the worm eats into wood, and for no other purpose.

There are, however, other persons, proud of their "Left Wing" tendencies, who quite unconsciously play the game of the Communists and imagine that in doing so they are helping the Cause and correcting at the same time an ill-tendency towards intolerance on the part of the rest of the Movement.

Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth; but, artfully using the period of co-operation with Russia as a cover for their own destructive tactics against the Labour Party, the Communists do succeed in creating confusion in some minds, particularly when they coo and conceal their real objective under innumerable pretences and professions.

It is not untrue to say that British Communists will pretend and profess anything to further Communist ends, but loyalty to Social Democracy will never come from that quarter. The sooner mistaken sympathisers realise the true implications of the situation so much the better. And this is why the Labour Party statement should be universally read.

There is, however, a side to this question which cannot be ignored, and it is admirably stated in the last issue of "Labour Discussion Notes," issued by the Social Clarity Group. We quote:—

"The Labour Party cannot, however, be satisfied with the purely negative act of rejecting of C.P. affiliation, coupled with heresy-hunting of those who associate with it. The danger symptoms evidenced by the growth of the C.P. remain, and a positive remedy has to be found. The key to this remedy lies in the realisation that *the C.P. only becomes a danger in the measure that the Labour Party fails in its tasks.*

"The C.P. grows in the vacuum that is left if Labour fails to give full political leadership to the country at large and to its own members. If Labour does not give the imaginative and active leadership that appeals to the new masses then the C.P. will grow (or, if new changes in the C.P. line rule this out, something similar to the C.P.).

"Equally, if Labour does not succeed in developing a policy covering the whole field of national politics, the C.P. will grow. Unless Labour can produce leaders and leadership in fields that still are novel to it (such as Foreign Policy, propaganda, the Empire) then it can never convince the country that it can govern. The aim must be to show the same mastery and self-confidence in all fields of administration as we show to-day in the domestic field alone.

"But, above all, this analysis has shown that a great share of the responsibility must rest upon the active local minority that is the real core of the Labour Movement. The very rise in members of the C.P. must be regarded as a danger signal warning us that we have not yet succeeded in re-shaping our organisation, policy and methods to meet the challenge of the new political atmosphere.

"This year's Conference will be a testing one—perhaps the last before peace. It will show whether Labour can meet the challenge of the new England, of the millions who have never voted, who expect something new and who, above all, expect self-confidence and imagination in their democratic leaders."

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Much interesting  
matter reaches us  
while in the Press

**LOOK OUT FOR NEXT  
ISSUE**

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# REGIONALISM

That the Local Government Committee of the Labour Party has raised a hornet's nest by its provisional proposals entitled "Local Government and the Post-War World" is now obvious to everyone. It would be a grave misfortune if this Report is approved by the coming Conference: the whole matter ought to be postponed for further enquiry.

Much of the trouble arises from the methods of the Committee. The way to consultation and agreement is *not* to come forward with cut and dried proposals and to call conference to decide for or against. In that way the dice is heavily loaded in favour of any drawn-up scheme. And Committees of the N.E.C. have been guilty of that sort of thing before.

One might have thought that the agents of the Party (many of whom have at least as much experience of Local Government as members of the Committee) would have been consulted. But no, the agents' organisation learnt of this matter only long after the proposals were launched. For aught we know some other report, or a supplementary report, is now out. We don't know; we don't know what has been done, or is doing; we are completely in the dark. The Party is mighty ill-advised if it proceeds to seek a solution on so thorny a question in an air of mystery.

We recently printed Coventry's "alternatives." While agreeing in the main with that Party's objections to the present proposals, we do not attach ourselves to the alternative proposals; that is to say, not yet. We want to see further evidence, further discussion, and other proposals, and not least to get in full perspection the views of other bodies on the general future of Government, before committing ourselves to any new theory of structure.

A thoughtful contribution on the subject comes to us from Coun. Geo. L. Deacon, Chairman of the Kingston D.L.P., and member of Malden Borough Council. The memorandum from which we quote is to be considered by the Surrey Federations, whose views we shall be glad later to know.

Coun. Deacon's general observations may be summarised as follows:—

The proposals appear to be based upon the assumption that we shall return to pre-war conditions after the war, namely, the same economic and political system with its concomitants of public assistance and social services designed to alleviate some of the effects of an outworn acquisitive system of society.

The proposals are also objected to because it is believed wiser to utilise all our efforts for the achievement of Socialism rather waste time in entirely remodelling Local Government whilst leaving control control based upon Capitalism.

The proposals for "regionalism" are regarded as unnecessary and a step away from democracy. "Regionalism" has a tendency towards "totalitarianism." Regional bodies for planning and for co-ordination of certain functions can be understood, but with strictly limited duties and powers. Any Regional Authority for general purposes interposed between present or revised Local Authorities and the Ministries is objected to.

The proposed replacement of present authorities by Area Councils is opposed. The Councils would need to be of a size that would lessen contact with the electorate and would thus result in a loss of democratic control.

The "provisional proposals" are not in the interests of the Party, says the Memorandum, and if the proposals are carried out, we see Labour-voting districts becoming sterilised by dilution with non-labour-voting districts, and fewer Labour representatives in the larger authorities suggested.

Reasons of space forbid one printing the document in full, but we quote:

"Something can be said in favour of some regional committee for planning purposes or catchment areas, or even the administration of nationally-owned and controlled transport, but the suggestion to hand over all other Local Government functions to Regional Authorities is not worthy of consideration. Such Regional Authority in peace-time would be a very handy instrument for strike-breaking. They would have been a god-send to Labour's enemies in 1926."

We shall further refer to Mr. Deacon's proposals next month.

(A pamphlet on this question, by Alderman J. W. Foster, J.P., of Durham, whose knowledge of these matters few can rival, will be reviewed next month.

# Electoral Machinery

## (Third Article)

This month we will deal with the Home Office report on Continuous Registration.

We believe we are right in saying that the first mention in British politics of this proposal was in the pages of this Journal so far back as in 1929. We therefore have a special interest in the matter, though since 1929 we have moved somewhat, and, as our readers will gather from recent issues, we actually to-day advocate no separate Electoral Registration at all—but instead the right of every citizen to vote in his area on production of title, i.e., his identity card, thus making National Registration serve for all purposes. It already serves for a multitude.

The Report, it will be noticed, comes up against the snag of differing franchises for Parliamentary and Local Government purposes. The laboured proposals to preserve this duplication tire one. How much superior would be a single franchise for all purposes. A gleam of light on this question does strike the Committee and we draw our readers' attention to the significant concluding sentence in Para. 27. A direct recommendation on this matter would of course have been outside the Committee's term of reference. Here is something for a live Labour M.P. to hang on to; and something to achieve.

The following is the Report on this question in slight abbreviation.

### Continuous Registration

19. The term "continuous registration" implies an antithesis to the present periodical system. Its conception is a registration of resident electors qualified by age which is in continuous being and continuously modified by arrivals, departures, deaths and attainment of adult age. The idea is that a live register of this kind could at any point of time represent the electorate qualified to vote at an election at that time. The present qualifying period of residence between fixed dates, which is an integral feature of the present periodical system, would be replaced by a qualification in that con-

stituency in which the elector had last resided for the requisite period preceding a date fixed by reference to the notice given of that election. Such a system could secure, if desired, that no elector was removed from the register of any constituency until entered upon the register of another, and vice versa. Such a continuously changing register would be "frozen" when notice of a Parliamentary election was given. Persons otherwise qualified and having at that time the requisite minimum residence in the constituency would constitute the electorate for that election, the register of that electorate being thereupon printed for the ordinary election purposes.

20. The essential condition of such a system is the provision of the notifications necessary for maintenance purposes. . . We have accordingly given much consideration to the framing of a plan for continuous electoral registration in the form of an extension of the services of the National Register system to provide the material for establishing and maintaining a series of local registers in the charge of Electoral Registration Officers.

21. **Local Government Franchise.** — The scheme applies to Parliamentary registration only, and makes no provision for local government elections. We are satisfied that no continuous system could be applied to the local government franchise. . . A canvass determining the persons qualified during a fixed date period or at a fixed point of time, producing results valid for a fixed period, is essential to the present local government franchise.

22. So long, therefore, as the present local government franchise stands, the present machinery must stand with it. On the other hand, to meet the needs of a General Election under exceptional post-war conditions, the new continuous machinery will also be required, although the products of both systems can be incorporated in one and the same register.

(We much regret our inability to find space this month for the remainder of this article.)

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